

First time House has passed a budget during an election year since 2000

(Washington, D.C.) -- U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today voted for the final FY 2009 budget resolution, which extends tax cuts for more than 20 million middle-class Americans, strengthens funding for our nation's veterans, and protects funding for Medicare. The FY 2009 budget resolution supports extensions of the child tax credit, the research and development tax credit, marriage penalty relief, and the deduction of state and local sales taxes. It will also help to ensure millions of Americans do not become subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT).

The House passed the budget by a vote of 214-210 today, following yesterday's Senate approval of the budget. This is the first time Congress has successfully agreed upon a budget resolution during an election year since 2000.

“This budget reflects western Pennsylvanians’ priorities -- it supports tax cut extensions for hard-working Americans, honors our nation’s commitment to care for our veterans, and safeguards funding for Medicare,” Altmire said. **“I am particularly proud that this budget increases funding for the Veterans Administration so it can meet increasing demands and make much-needed improvements to aging facilities. When it comes to making federal spending decisions, no group should stand before our nation’s veterans.”**

In February, Congressman Altmire testified before the House Budget Committee to lay out his priorities for the federal budget, which included providing the Veterans Administration with the \$4.9 billion funding increase it needs to provide quality health care and services; defeating the president's attempt to slash funding for Medicare, which would have raised beneficiaries' premiums by \$26 billion; and rejecting the president's proposal to dramatically cut funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program that helps small western Pennsylvania fire departments buy new equipment and upgrade facilities. All of these proposals were adopted by the committee and included in the final budget that passed today.

“Congressman Altmire has been a true champion for America’s veterans throughout the federal budget process,” Congressman John Spratt (SC-5), Chairman of the House Budget Committee said. **“When he testified before the House Budget Committee in February, Congressman Altmire made sure that the needs of our nation’s veterans took top priority. I want to thank Congressman Altmire for always working to ensure that the VA has the resources it needs to provide our heroes with quality health care and services.”**